

A L B E R T A

BLOOD INDIAN ORDAINED PRIEST

by **EARL DOUCETTE**

At 10.30 Saturday morning, February 23, 1963, over 400 Indians made their way to St. Mary's Catholic Church on the Blood Reserve near Cardston, Alta. They came to an overcrowded church to honor a member of their own tribe, the first treaty Indian in Canada to be ordained a Catholic priest.

They came from all parts of the Reservation, Catholics and Protestants. They came to pay their respects and their honor to their newly-given priest. They came to see Marvin Fox, 27 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. George Fox, become the first member of their tribe to be elevated to the Holy Priesthood.

I saw them from my window. They came by car, horse and wagon, and on foot, streaming across the prairie. I saw old men and women, defying muscle and age, come walking and tripping over the stubbled fields. They had to get there. This was a big day of the Indians. Many, when they arrived had to stand on the steps in the vestibule. The church, always generous, overloaded herself to accomodate, so as not to disappoint her Indians, all who came to witness and receive this blessing on their tribe.

According to books and movies, we've been led to believe that Indians are unemotional — they never shed tears. Well you can start rewriting your misleading books and movies. I was there. I saw. In St. Mary's overcrowded church I saw Indians who, over-

come with emotion, gave way to tears of joy. I saw Indians repeatedly swallow, as I did myself, to rid themselves of pulsating lump in their throats.

I saw Oblate priest and Indians stand a little taller. I saw some who were too filled with joy to speak. On this morning of mornings, the Oblate Priests of Mary Immaculate at last saw the fruits of their labours. 75 years of sacrifice, prayers, sweat and privations, have produced for them and God, the first pinpoint of light. It is hoped that this pinpoint will shine and show the way for others.

The Most Rev. Francis P. Carroll, Bishop of Calgary, ordained the young priest. He said, « A vocation to the priesthood is the greatest gift God has bestowed on men. God offers this gift, not to one people, not to one nation, but to men of every nation under heaven ».

Father M. LAFRANCE, former principal of St. Mary's School, now Provincial of the Oblates, spoke to the congregation. « When Father Fox first came to us, he did not speak English, but from the beginning showed remarkable aptitude for learning. He has come through 7 years training in moral and spiritual discipline with strength and fortitude. Father Fox will be a credit to his race wherever in the world he may be called on to serve God and Mankind ».

Father Fox said his first Mass Sunday morning. After Mass he gave an individual blessing to over 400 people.

Father FORTIER, present principal of St. Mary's School, galvanized the school into action. Priest, Sisters and staff prepared reception of visitors and a banquet for Father Fox. 150 people attended, including 50 priests from three western provinces.

After the banquet, a concert was also held in the community Hall in his honor. There Father Fox presented Edwin « Smokey » Wells with the Tom

Longboat medal » for the most outstanding Indian Athlete in Alberta.

Father Fox will be living on a much different plane than that of his tribe. He realizes the work that has to be done.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep, And miles to go,
before I sleep—

And miles to go, before I sleep.

From Indian Record

FATHER FOX VISITS DUCK LAKE

by Mrs. B. G. BROWN

On March 17, 1963, in the chapel of St. Michael's Residential School here High Mass was sung by Rev. Father M. Fox, first Treaty Indian in Western Canada to be ordained a priest.

Father Fox is from the Blood Indian Reserve near Cardston, Alberta, where he was ordained February 23.

Father Anthony DUHAIME, principal, knew Father Fox at Cardston IRS when, as a youngster he began his studies there.

The chapel was filled to capacity. The school choir directed by Rev. Father G. GAUTHIER, sang. Father DUHAIME welcomed Fr. Fox; recalling memories of the lad he had greeted at Cardston years ago, depicting him as a normal boy, not liking school but loving horses and sports! But also a boy who planned and realized his plans. Father stressed that vocation to the priesthood is given by God to all nations. What he has given to a Blood Indian, He certainly gives too to Cree Indians.

After Mass Fr. Fox blessed those who had attended; later in the forenoon he blessed the staff and over 200 children at the school.